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School Committee Minutes 05-08-2001

ARLINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY, MAY 8, 2001
7:30 PM

Present: **Joani LaMachia, Chair** **Suzanne Owayda**
 David W. McKenna, Vice-Chair **Paul Schlichtman**
 Denis J. Sullivan, Secretary **Martin J. Thrope**
 Barbara C. Goodman

Supt. Kathleen Donovan, Marilyn Bisbicos, Director of Special Education@ 8:25

Absent: Joanne Gurry, Asst. Supt. Curriculum & Instruction

Call To Order: 7:35 PM

Chair, Ms. LaMachia acknowledged the students and families of middle school students in Newton, and the passing of Ruth Ann Santino, teacher in Arlington who lost her battle with cancer over the weekend. Ms. LaMachia asked for a moment of silence.

Public Participation

Eric Segal Hardy parent addressed the committee relative to school recess. He thanked the administration and members of the School Committee for their availability and willingness to work on resolving the issue. Mr. Siegel hopes that the Committee will review the process in a few months.

Carol Kowalski, Brackett School parent stated that the feeling of the school councils, principals, and parents was that they lacked authority and flexibility to provide the 30 minutes per day of recess requested. Ms. Kowalski offered her willingness to work with the schools on behalf of the students to continue to pursue a solution for K-5 recess.

Secretary's Report

Ms. LaMachia took the opportunity to announce that Denis Sullivan has been

Mr. Sullivan reviewed correspondence. He stated that a letter received from the Ottoson School Council and OPAC regarding screens is going through the appropriate channels. A letter from a 6th grade student at Ottoson Middle School regarding holy observances will be responded to by the Committee.

School Recess

Ms. LaMachia summarized that at the meeting of March 27th the committee heard concerns from parents about the lack of recess time. The Superintendent directed the principals to work with school councils to look at options and to develop a workable plan. School Councils met, reviewed options and time on learning requirements. Mrs. Donovan read a statement from the principals that read in part 'We understand the importance of active learning, the integration of play and learning, physical education, recess and unstructured play and time in the lives of young children. We invite and encourage parents to join with us in creating and supporting these opportunities both during and after school.

We recommend that teachers, principals and other staff members collaborate to find opportunities to play outside when appropriate, where possible'.

Supt. Donovan recommended that kindergarten classes have 2 daily recess sessions; 1 in the morning and 1 in the afternoon. The Superintendent revealed that the plan for grades 1-5 works out to approximately 45 additional minutes per week, which would work out to an additional recess time at lunchtime and another 15 minute recess sometime during the day. On the days when physical education is scheduled there would be only 1 recess period. In order to accomplish the additional recess time Mrs. Donovan explained that a portion of time would be taken from other classes on an alternating basis.

On a motion by Mr. Thrope and seconded by Mr. Sullivan

Voted the Superintendent's recommendation on providing additional recess time in grades K-5.

Ms Goodman asked that the motion be amended to include "that the School Committee revisit the issue in the fall in find out ways in which time has been implemented" Unanimous

Hardy After School Program

Supt. Donovan reported that the program would be an after school pilot program run by the school department as opposed to the current private programs held at each school. Mrs. Donovan requested that the agenda item be placed on the next school committee meeting since

Hardy principal, Jerry Carmody was not able to attend tonight's meeting.

Vanguard Award/Thompson School

Thompson School will be honored as one of ten schools in Massachusetts to be named a Vanguard Model by Mass Insight Education. The school will receive the award on June 1st at the Seaport Hotel in Boston. The school was chosen for:

- .. Implementing a higher standards curriculum & culture.
- .. Higher standards teaching through strategic professional development.
- .. Using data, assessment, and technology to drive higher learning standards for every student.

Thompson School principal Mike McCabe acknowledged that the award represents a lot of work, dedication, and commitment by the staff. The Committee offered their congratulations.

AHS Principal Search Update

Supt. Donovan reported that the search committee finished the interviewing and screening of candidates. Mrs. Donovan has received the names of the finalists and interviews are scheduled for the end of this week and early next week. At this point the names are not public.

Budget Review

Mrs. Donovan stated that due to time constraints she was unable to finalize budget figures for the committee to review. The Superintendent will review the budget for any additional funding that can be found and will send recommendations out to committee members.

Update on Town Meeting

Supt. Donovan stated that she would present the Peirce School funding at Town Meeting on Wednesday evening. She stated that although the committee did vote for the school department to absorb the additional costs between the bid and the actual cost for the rebuilding of the Peirce School, she believed that a solution to the funding will be found.

In response to Mr. Sullivan's question on whether the money is expected to come out of funds allocated to the school, Mrs. Donovan reaffirmed that it was. Supt. Donovan stated that the motion does state that if there is any other way to fund the additional costs that it would not come out of the school budget. The Superintendent does believe that we will be receiving a waiver from the School Building Assistance Bureau for a certain amount of money on the Peirce School.

Mr. Thrope expressed concern that the Committee has had no time to discuss the implications of the May 1st meeting and made the following motion.

Moved to Rescind the committee's May 1st vote regarding the Peirce debt service. No second.

Ms. LaMachia commented that the Committee took the best vote possible given the information available at the time and that we should stand by that decision. Supt. Donovan and the rest of the Committee agreed that there is an issue of trust in working together with the Finance Committee, and rescinding the motion would not be considered a good-faith action by the committee.

Recess

PTBC Update

Mr. Thrope reported that he had a walk-through of the Hardy School. It is on schedule and is in the best shape of any of the schools at this point in construction. Mrs. Donovan invited members of the committee for a walk through of the building one hour before the next scheduled meeting (May 24th).

Subcommittee Report

Policy & Procedures

Mr. Thrope reported that Mr. Hardy from MASC oriented new members on the process of updating the policy manual. The target date remains to and have the completed manual for the full committee to review for final approval remains the end of the school year.

At the request of the Chair, file:FF/FFA/FFB was discussed and approved by the subcommittee. Mr. Thrope supplied the full committee with a draft of the policy for their consideration. He would like to vote to accept the policy at the next regular meeting.

A new 'buddy list' will be distributed to all members.

New Business

- .. Supt. Donovan stated that the DOE approved the district wide student success plan submitted by APS.
- .. Mr. Thrope observed that the meeting of October 9th conflicts with a religious observance.
- .. Mr. Thrope requested that the Ottoson Activity Day be an agenda item and that the Committee receive an update on the scoreboard and defibrillator issue.
- .. Mr. Sullivan offered to continue as the SC representative on the Infrastructure Committee.
- .. Ms. Goodman noted that a vote on school choice must be taken at the next meeting.
- .. Ms. Goodman along with Mr. Schlichtman will work on a resolution to send to MASC on the education reform formula and SBAB funding.
- .. Mr. Schlichtman is captain of the cancer relay on June 8th & 9th .
- .. Mr. McKenna took the opportunity to thank Supt. Donovan for her success on Peirce Field.
- .. Ms. LaMachia thanked Bob Sprague for the new APS 2000-2001 in review.
- .. Ms. LaMachia requested an update/cost estimate for the screens at Ottoson Middle School.

On a motion by Mr. Sullivan and seconded by Mr. Thorpe it was

Voted to enter executive session for a personnel issue with no further business to be conducted upon return to open session. RC:
Unanimous

Executive session 9:35-10:10

On a motion by Mr. Thrope and seconded by Mr. Sullivan it was
Voted to adjourn @ 10:10 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Tassone
Committee Secretary